

11,355 souls, while the population of Holland, notwithstanding the very dark future, increased in the same year by 117,815 souls, a number that has never been reached before.

I believe it a wrong view to consider Holland as "a little island of optimism." Those who look farther ahead and know the circumstances cannot help seeing it as "a little island without any sense of responsibility," and with a dark future if a fresh insight does not quickly gain ground.

W. TEUPKEN, M.D.

Ruychrocklaan 22,
The Hague.

Is Britain Over-populated?

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I trust you will allow me a little space in support of a minority view concerning population.

It seems to me idle and over-optimistic to expect the average man or woman of to-day's birth-productive age-group to be concerned with the worlds of 1980 or 2045 to the extent of having children they would not otherwise have. They are likely to regard the long-term view as morbidly remote. As it is, the average Briton to-day, after years of misleading statements in the popular Press, firmly believes (1) that the British Isles are under-populated; and (2) that the population has been falling. Both beliefs are, of course, diametrically opposed to the facts. In spite of these beliefs Britons were not spurred on to larger families between the two wars.

It seems to me unassailably self-evident that Britain has a population grossly in excess of her optimum. Apart from the terrific density of 710 per square mile for England and Wales (more than double the pre-war densities of Japan and Germany), one has only to observe the obvious physical signs of overcrowding everywhere (I am not counting wartime overcrowding). In Britain it has become almost impossible to get away from the sickening sight of too much humanity. People swarm everywhere like microbes. London has become a vast series of satellite towns in which nine million souls now live. This necessitates the most gargantuan and intricate system of transport in the world to get the millions to and from their work each day. The millions of human parcels are pushed and squashed and packed into the trains, trams and buses—underground and overground—and dumped each morning, the worse for transit, into the nucleus. The scramble, the crush and the bedlam become worse with each succeeding year.

The greatest and most prevalent fallacy to-day is that any decline in the population from its present level is detrimental; that to be healthy a nation's birth rate must involve a continual increase of population.

Even before the sudden wartime rise in the birth rate, Britain's population was on the increase. It was only the birth rate that had been

falling—but even then never sufficiently not to show a survival margin.

There is also a great lack of realism among those who have fallen for the population scare. Many seem to have overlooked the elementary fact that these tiny isles are extremely limited in physical capacity; that, like Belgium, India, China and other densely populated countries we are bound to be at a disadvantage compared with countries like Russia and the United States which, although they already have colossal populations, could easily support greater numbers by reason of their enormous size. Russia occupies one-sixth of the world's land surface.

As to the rise in the age composition: Criminal statistics show that the climax of anti-social behaviour is reached round about the age of 20. And Havelock Ellis rightly pointed out that the age of youth is the age of violence and disorder; that the fact that we are getting older in years (though younger in health and energy) involves a great social advantage. The National Council for Social Service, in a recent report, foresaw an era of sturdier old age in which people will not retire from active life at 60, and it is obvious to my mind that a civilization based on greater maturity of individual age promises to be saner and greater.

As to the patriotic factor: If the world of our grandchildren is to exist at all, it is obvious it will need to become one united whole, with Britain as one of the parts. The whole will be greater than the part, and all international rivalry and anarchy being eliminated, there will be no need of either a population race or an armaments race in order that England may still be England.

To my mind all population prophecies are futile. As to the present flood of lucubrations, the seas of "facks n' figgers" and the deluge of abstractions, one is tempted to take the levity of observing that it is all an indication of the drone-like nature of a considerable portion of the human species in this mechanized age—a portion too far removed from the real and simple values of the hive!

The Mrs. Joneses and the Mrs. Smiths, although not exactly Stakhanovites of the birth-production line, could no doubt tell these doctrinary drones a few home truths about all the vulgar realities of the last six years—how, between all the waiting and the queueing and the fears, they probably had to get the washing out on the line on a Monday before having a baby on the Tuesday.

It would be more advantageous to all concerned if, instead of excessive concern with posterity, the doctrinary drones put their minds to the manifold urgent problems of our own time, such as the World State made vitally necessary by the atom bomb, and the threat of unemployment.

This healthier and more practical application of their minds might serve even their own ends better than idle laments on possible future trends

of the population. But as far as our own time is concerned over-population in Britain has already done irreparable harm—witness the oceans of badly designed and shoddily constructed "houses" which litter our once lovely countryside.

BERNARD CHARLESWORTH.

5 Scarsdale Studios,
Kensington, W.8.

Sex Education

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The following experience may be of interest. During the early days of the "Blitz" I gave shelter to six lads, aged 12-14, evacuated from one of the poorest districts of Birmingham. When they arrived they were indescribably dirty and primitive in many ways; but soon learnt to adapt themselves to civilized life, even to sitting down to their meals!

As was natural they showed great interest in the animals on my farm. Among other strange questions I was asked why I kept a bull if he gave no milk. I answered that he was the father of the calves, and left it at that for the time being. Soon afterwards, while we were together in a field, the boys saw the bull serve one of his cows. As far as I could observe they either did not understand what was going on, or were too "modest" to remark on it. I am inclined to think the former conjecture the right one. However that may be, it seemed clear that these lads had not the knowledge of the "facts of life" which, considering their ages, and the kind of homes from which they came, might reasonably have been expected.

These happenings suggest that the need for sex education, so ably maintained by Mr. Cyril Bibby (whose paper as a biologist and former school-master I greatly appreciate), goes down to the lowest strata of our population.

MATTHEW DAVENPORT HILL.

Uplands Cottage,
Nr. Ledbury,
Hereford.

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